

## **WATERSHED LESSON #6:**

### *Partnerships Equal Power*

***“Far different from the adversarial emphasis of traditional environmentalism, the focus of the watershed approach is to work cooperatively to build healthy watershed communities.”***

- Joy Huber, *River Voices*, Fall/Winter, 1995

### ***Give credit where due.***

Watershed work is about partnerships. Essential ingredients for effective partnerships include: focusing on common interests, respecting each participant's view point, thanking each other, being willing to learn about others' needs and positions, and building trust. The important thing is to pull together a partnership that is of manageable size, creates synergy, and represents the key interests in the watershed.

No one entity can solve all the issues in any given watershed. Watershed partnerships come in all shapes and sizes, with each partner having a different interest. Some partnerships are loosely structured, while others are quite formal. Some groups are open, while others are closed -- meaning they do not allow anyone else to join. Regardless of how they are structured, making partnerships work is challenging and takes commitment. Common issues that partnerships face include selecting a leader, ensuring that all the right people are involved, and moving beyond any hostility that may exist among members. If a group is able to develop esprit de corps, they can be quite effective. To get past the “forming and storming stages,” some groups have set ground rules under which individuals can complain for only a certain amount of time, after which they must move on. Some groups have decided to say that issues that are too divisive are not to be discussed.

Partners can include any one who has an interest in the watershed. This ranges from conservation groups, local elected officials, chambers of commerce, environmental education organizations, local military bases, farm groups, students, senior citizen and religious organizations, financial groups, credit unions, and land developers, among others. The important thing is to include all the key interest groups so that you can tap into their strengths, increase your credibility, reduce duplication of effort, and make optimal use of limited funds.

In terms of lessons learned, experienced watershed practitioners say that one-on-one contact is most effective in eliciting support. Further, building partnerships takes time and commitment, and once built they need to be nurtured. However, their benefits are clear as they can lead to wider acceptance and quicker implementation of projects.

## ***Cheat River, West Virginia***

### ***Where Partnership Improves Everyone's Quality of Life***

***“The ‘River of Promise’ is a perfect example  
of [a] partnership approach in action.”***

***- Joe Piotrowski, Associate Director, Office of Watersheds, U.S. EPA Region 3***

When a major acid mine blowout turned the Cheat River orange, concerned stakeholders in the watershed mobilized to form *Friends of the Cheat*. Water quality had been bad for many years, but now it was much worse and time to address the runoff from over a century of coal mining. “We could have focused all of our energy on confronting the parties responsible for the degradation, but we recognized that this was just one part of a much greater issue,” says Dave Bassage, FOC Executive Director. “Acid mine drainage is a huge problem in the Cheat, and we knew we would need to tap into every possible resource to address it.”

*Friends of the Cheat* brought together over 20 groups to restore the Cheat watershed by collaborating, sharing information, and building on each other's work. The various interests developed and signed a proclamation called “*River of Promise: A Shared Commitment for the Restoration of the Cheat River, West Virginia.*” Signatories included federal and state agencies, environmental groups, local government, and a coal company.

The River of Promise Task Force meets quarterly to monitor progress and coordinate future projects. In 1996, reclamation projects funded at a total of more than \$6 million were initiated; the state took on a comprehensive water quality assessment, the USGS installed a critical sampling station, and EPA made available \$200,000 for *Friends of the Cheat* to implement projects in the watershed under the direction of the River of Promise Technical committee.

***We'd rather shake hands than raise our fists,  
and that strategy has really paid off.***

“We've got a long way to go,” says Bassage, “but water quality has already started to improve. By focusing on partnerships and including a broad range of interests, we have eliminated hurdles and opened doors. We'd rather shake hands than raise our fists, and that strategy has really paid off.” The key to effective partnerships, he feels, is to get all potential interests in a room together and work towards consensus, rather than trying to coordinate from a distance. He notes that the spirit of cooperation is now so strong that it is often difficult to tell which groups individuals represent.

One important lesson, he believes, is the value of involving local industry in the effort. This lends much needed credibility to the partnership, and allows the community as a

whole to see that the effort works and is not about big government, special issues, and confrontation. On the contrary, it is inclusive, broad-based and focused on a goal (clean water) that benefits everyone and improves the quality of life.

***For more information:*** contact Dave Bassage, Friends of the Cheat, 304-379-3141, 304-379-3142 (fax), [dbassage@access.mountain.net](mailto:dbassage@access.mountain.net)

## ***Fish Creek Watershed, Indiana and Ohio Can Partners Look Beyond Their Individual Interests?***

The effectiveness of stakeholder partnerships is well illustrated in the work being done at the Fish Creek Watershed, which drains 110 square miles of agricultural land in northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio. The creek is noted for having the most diverse assemblage of freshwater mussels in the Great Lakes Basin: 31 species inhabit the creek. Of these, three are endangered. Soil erosion and loss of wetlands and forest land threaten the system.

Together, partners from a multitude of public and private organizations have succeeded in reforesting land along the creek, fencing livestock, restoring wetlands, and creating a nature reserve. Larry Clemens, of the Nature Conservancy, attributes the success of the project to the fact that each partner is able to look beyond his or her organization's 'traditional' interest and focus on the needs of the watershed.

The partners share a vision that water quality should be protected in a way that allows for economic development. Implementing the vision requires a lot of "cold calling" on the part of the partners to build bridges with landowners. They also use a local advisory group to solicit the input of local citizens in individual projects.

***The project manager shared this information with the partners,  
who then stepped forward with the funds.***

The reforestation project, which affected some 265 acres of row crop (corn and soy beans) fields along the creek, is a tangible example of how the partnership works. Not sure of where to begin, the project manager turned to the local advisory group and asked for guidance. Knowing the community, the group strongly recommended that, as a first step, the Fish Creek Watershed Project should offer to pay 100 percent of the reforestation costs. The project manager shared this information with the partners, who then stepped forward with the funds. Funding partners included US Fish and Wildlife Service, Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service), local soil and water conservation districts, OH Department of Natural Resources, IN Department of Natural Resources, National Turkey Federation, US EPA, and the Nature Conservancy.

**For more information:** contact Larry Clemens, 219-665-9141, 219-665-9141 (fax) or visit the Nature Conservancy's home page and see the Indiana subsection, [www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org).

## ***Know Your Watershed***

### ***A Key Resource for All Partnerships***

*Know Your Watershed*, a public-private partnership operating out of West Lafayette, Indiana, supports existing watershed partnerships and helps in the creation of new ones. Its goal is to have 2000 watershed partnerships in the nation by the year 2000. As of mid-1997, it had identified over 1000. *Know Your Watershed* supports watershed-to-watershed networking, technology transfer efforts, and capacity building at the regional, state, and local levels. Their Starter Kit (see Lesson #7 under Key Contacts and Resources) hones in on the keys to making watershed groups work. Project Manager Karol Keppy explains, "Lack of funds and lack of a full-time watershed coordinator are often excuses. The real problem usually lies deeper. It centers on fear of conflict, fear of working with the 'opposition,' or lack of sincere understanding of all the sides of issues."

*Know Your Watershed* works with national and state partners to multiply the watershed approach message. For example, partners like Tennessee Valley Authority, River Network, North American Lake Management Society, and others joined together in 1997 to sponsor a Southeast Regional Watershed workshop in Chattanooga, TN. Another example is a Farmer-Led Watershed Initiatives Conference sponsored by the National Pork Producers Council, Dupont, Novartis, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, and the McKnight Foundation in Mankato, Minnesota. Further, in the Elk Creek Watershed in Montana, the Adopt-A-Stream project and the local conservation district worked with the Montana-based *Know Your Watershed*, an independent state effort that utilizes materials created by the national partnership, to hold a workshop at which local residents decided to establish a watershed council. A 20-year vision was also developed: the creek was to be "running full length with good water" and was to have "numerous fish" and "happy neighbors." The new council wanted to correct the severe erosion problems in the creek that had begun with a 1995 flooding. This new partnership has been successful in securing a Section 319 grant and State Fishery grants to help support their pilot restoration project.

**For more information:** contact Jill Davies, 14 Old Bull River Road, Noxon, MT 59853, [nox2228@montana.com](mailto:nox2228@montana.com) (email) or *Know Your Watershed*, 765-494-9555, 765-494-5969 (fax), [kyw@ctic.purdue.edu](mailto:kyw@ctic.purdue.edu)

## ***Key Contacts and Resources***

### **PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS STORIES AND INITIATIVES**

- ***Water Works: Your Neighbors Share Ideas on Working in Partnership for Clean Water:*** 1997, Tennessee Valley Authority, Water Management, 400 West Summit Hill

- Drive, WT 10D, Knoxville, TN, 37902-1499, Kathleen O'Brien, (lead author), 423-632-8502, 423-632-3188 (fax), kobrien@tva.gov, guide describing Tennessee Valley community leaders' efforts to form groups and keep their momentum - journalistic approach with on-the-ground examples. Provides many ideas for developing partnerships that work. Stories of Shirley Turner, Larry Zehnder, and Lynn Smith in particular.
- ***Watershed Management: Four Examples***, 60 minute video featured at Watershed '96 conference satellite down link, \$34. Great partnership examples, especially Henry's Fork, ID. Other case studies are Greenwich Bay, RI, Milwaukee River, WI, and Edward's Aquifer/Seco Creek, TX. Produced by Department of Soil and Atmospheric Sciences, Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University Resource Center, 7 Business/Technology Park, Ithaca, NY 14850, Phone: (607) 255-2090, Fax: (607) 255-9946, e-mail: Dist\_Center@cce.cornell.edu
  - ***Mark Twain Water Quality Initiative***: an alliance of farmers, soil and water conservation districts, government, agri-business, community officials, educators, schools, financial institutions, health departments, private industries, real estate boards, trade and commodity organizations, and special-interest groups to safeguard the water quality of Mark Twain Lake and six other public water supply reservoirs. This 18,000 acre lake is an important drinking water source in Northeast Missouri being threatened by agri-chemicals, nutrients, and sediment. Contact: Ray C. Archuleta, Water Quality Project Manager, Mark Twain Water Quality Initiative, USDA-NRCS Macon, MO (816) 385-6359 for additional information.
  - ***Coastal America: A Partnership Paradigm for Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems and Watersheds***, Virginia Tippie, Director, Gail Updegraff, Deputy Director, Coastal America, Silver Spring, MD, paper delivered at Watershed '96, <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/Proceed/tippie.html>
  - ***Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program "Partnership for Success,"*** Patty Perry, Executive Director Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program, LaGrande, OR, paper delivered at Watershed '96. <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/Proceed/perry.html>
  - ***McKenzie Watershed Council's Water Quality Partnership***, (funded by several Council partners) has been instrumental in developing and implementing a long-term water quality monitoring program that will assist in monitoring the health of the river over time. Coordinator, John Runyon, 541-752-0947, P.O. Box 1025, Corvallis, OR 97333, 541-766-8336 (fax), runyon@poraxis.com
  - ***Partnerships That Pay Off: TVA's Watershed Approach***, Wayne Poppe, Acting Manager Renee Hurst, Education Specialist, Clean Water Initiative, Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, TN, paper delivered at Watershed '96. <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/Proceed/poppe.html>
  - ***National Nonpoint Source Forum***, Larry Selzer, Conservation Fund and Chair of Forum, remarks at Watershed '96 <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/selzer.html> Excellent example of broad-based partnerships involving the public and private sectors. Tangible result is the National Watershed Awards. EPA Contact: Carl Myers, 202-260-7040, myers.carl@epamail.epa.gov
  - ***CREEC: A Central Oregon Partnership Focused on Watershed Education and Restoration***, Dean Grover, Forest Fisheries Biologist, Ochoco National Forest, Prineville,

OR, David A. Nolte, Bring Back the Natives Project Coordinator, Trout Unlimited, Redmond, OR, paper delivered at Watershed '96.

<http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/Proceed/grover.html>

- ***Rathbun Land and Water Alliance***, broad-based alliance, established as a non-profit, working to protect the drinking water supply in south central Iowa (rural community). Contact: Jim Cooper, 515-437-4376.
- ***China Lake Watershed Restoration Project Alliance***, established in 1994 as a regional nonprofit corporation to protect their drinking water and other uses of the lake. Involves three lake associations, three towns, a water district and a local water utility. Contact: Tony St. Peter, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, 207-287-3901, or Norm Marcotte, 207-287-7727, [www.state.me.us/dep/npst54.htm](http://www.state.me.us/dep/npst54.htm)
- ***Golf and the Environment: Creating a Sustainable Future***, Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States, short pamphlet developed by The Center for Resource Management, 1104 East Ashton Avenue, Suite 210, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84106, provides recommendations for environmentally sensitive golf courses. EPA contact: Phil Oshida, 202-260-6045.

#### PARTNERSHIPS WITH CORPORATIONS AND FARMERS

- ***Wildlife Habitat Council***, has succeeded in putting on the ground, in partnership with corporations and others, enhancement projects on over 400,000 acres in 41 states. 1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 920, Silver Spring, MD, 20910, 301-588-8994, 301-588-4629 (fax), [whc@cais.com](mailto:whc@cais.com), <http://www.wildlifehc.org/index.html> Regional offices located in South Carolina, Michigan, and Kentucky. Robert Johnson, Vice President. ***The Cooper River Corridor Project Community-Based Planning Initiative*** is a key example of the power of partnerships to achieve sustainable development within a watershed context.
- ***The Pork Industry's Environmental Partnerships***, Environmental Services, National Pork Producers Council, paper delivered by Jeff Gabriel at Watershed '96. <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/Proceed/gabriel.html>
- ***Farm-A-Syst***, Gary Jackson, 608-265-2773, 608-265-2775 (fax), paper presented at Watershed '96, <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/Proceed/jackson.html>

#### GENERAL PARTNERSHIP NETWORKING TOOLS AND MODELS

- ***Watershed Education: Goals and Strategies for Training, Communication and Partnerships***, short piece summarizing the outcome of a session that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation hosted in 1996 where approximately 60 key watershed educators gathered. Good discussion of partnerships., 1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036, 202-857-0166, 202-857-0162 (fax), [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org). Contact: Kathleen Pickering.
- ***West Virginia Watershed Network*** coordinates financial and technical assistance to local watershed associations, including newsletters to groups, statewide networking. Contact: George Constantz, West Virginia DEP, 304-856-3911, 304-856-3889 (fax).
- ***National Watershed Network***, Know Your Watershed, 765-494-9555, 765-494-5969 (fax), [kyw@ctic.purdue.edu](mailto:kyw@ctic.purdue.edu), <http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/Watershed/WatershedOptions.html>
- ***Sourcebook for Watershed Education*** provides details on creating or enhancing programmatic support for watershed education and problem solving. It includes

information on developing program vision and goals, obtaining community support and participation, program review and assessment, and sharing your story with others. Developed by Global Rivers Environmental Education Network, 206 South Fifth Avenue, Suite 150, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, [www.econet.apc.org/green/](http://www.econet.apc.org/green/) (313) 761-8142.

- ***1996-1997 River and Watershed Conservation Directory***, River Network, and the Department of Interior National Park Service, includes approximately 3,000 organizations whose missions directly involve river and/or watershed conservation. River Network, P.O. Box 8787, Portland, OR, (503) 241-3506, [rivernet@igc.apc.org](mailto:rivernet@igc.apc.org), (503) 241-9256 (fax)
- ***Missouri Watershed Information Network***, clearinghouse for watershed information in Missouri, Jerry Carpenter, University of Missouri Extension, 573-882-0085, [jerry\\_d.\\_carpenter@muccmail.missouri.edu](mailto:jerry_d._carpenter@muccmail.missouri.edu), Chris Bromley, administrative assistant, [Chris\\_Bromley@muccmail.missouri.edu](mailto:Chris_Bromley@muccmail.missouri.edu). Partnership of state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, natural resource interest groups, and private industries.

#### PARTNERSHIP GUIDES AND RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

- ***Using Nonprofit Organizations to Advance Estuary Program Goals***, EPA842B093008, November 1993, 1-800-490-9198. While designed for estuaries, this document examines how nonprofit organizations can fulfill the role of attracting and receiving funds as well as carrying out implementation and oversight. This document may be useful to watershed groups who are considering working with or setting up a nonprofit. Contact: Betsy Tam, EPA, 202-260-6502.
- ***Watershed Partnerships: A Strategic Guide for Local Conservation Efforts in the West***, 1997, Western Governors' Association, 600 17th Street, Suite 1705, South Tower, Denver, CO, 80202-5452, [www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org), 81 pages, <http://www.westgov.org/wga/publicat/wsweb.htm>
- ***National Watershed Awards***, annual award program to recognize innovative watershed protection by communities, <http://www.terrene.org/cfaward.htm>, <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/cfindust.html>, <http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/KYW/KWY.html>